

REMARKS

Summary of the Office Action

Claims 12-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by (USPN 5,541,000) to Hardy.

Claims 15-18 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claims, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Summary of the Response to the Office Action

Claims 12-14 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 15-18 have each been amended to include the limitations of previous claims 12 and 13. Accordingly, claims 1, 3, 4, 6-11 and 15-18 are presently pending.

The Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 12-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by (USPN 5,541,000) to Hardy. By way of the foregoing amendment, claims 12-14 have been cancelled. Accordingly, this rejection is moot. For this reason, Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Allowable Subject Matter

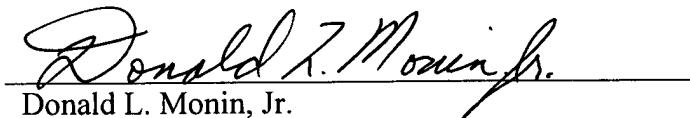
Claims 15-18 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but are indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In accordance with this indication, claims 15-18 have each been amended to include the features of previous claims 12 and 13. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 15-18, as amended, are in prima-facie condition for allowance. Thus, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 1, 3, 4, 6-11 and 15-18 are in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants request the entry of this Amendment to place the application in clear condition for allowance or, in the alternative, in better form for appeal. Applicants also request the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application and the timely allowance of the pending claims. Should the Examiner feel that there are any issues outstanding after consideration of this response, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative to expedite prosecution.

If there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-0310. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 not accounted for above, such an extension is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Respectfully Submitted,
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